

## REMARKS

This response is being made pursuant to receipt of the final Office action mailed April 3, 2003. In that final Office Action claims 1-4, 6, 19, 21, 22, 24-26 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over portions of the applicant's application in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,721,070 to Tanaka et al (hereinafter "Tanaka"). For the following reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Initially, the undersigned respectfully asserts that the Examiner is improperly interpreting the Tanaka reference, and further that Tanaka does not show or suggest the features of independent claims 1, 9, 19, and 35. As explained in applicant's previous response, Tanaka discloses a portable engine-operated working machine having a control panel 8 that is shown in Figure 1. The control panel 8 includes a pair of AC outlets 8c that are positioned immediately adjacent one another (i.e., actually one above the other) with no form of selector whatsoever disposed longitudinally between the two receptacles. The control panel 8 further includes AC/DC output terminals 8d, and the sideboard 8b (i.e., the portion the Examiner refers to as a "control panel" on the side of the frame) includes voltage indicators 8e and switches 8f. Again, the function of switches 8f is not provided in the specification of Tanaka et al.

There is absolutely nothing in Tanaka et al that would suggest, let alone disclose, to one of ordinary skill in the art the advantage of separating the two AC outlets 8c at opposite longitudinal ends of the control panel and disposing a control switch therebetween to control selection of one or the other of the two outlets. The undersigned is at a loss to understand how the Examiner could possibly come to this

conclusion without taking the novel aspects of applicant's own invention into account in making this obviousness rejection.

The Examiner is strongly encouraged to review the wording of claim 1 again. It will be noted that claim 1 specifically calls for a "first electrical outlet" that is disposed adjacent a first longitudinal end of the second zone, and a "second electrical outlet" disposed adjacent a second longitudinal end of the second zone, and a "voltage selector switch" disposed longitudinally in-between the first and second outlets. There is absolutely nothing in Tanaka that would suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art (absent using the teachings of the applicant's own application) that it would be highly beneficial to separate the two AC outlets that include the selector switch that is used to select one or the other of the outlets longitudinally in between the two outlets.

Furthermore, there is nothing in Tanaka et al that explains that the two AC outlets 8c are meant to provide different output voltages (e.g., 120 VAC and 240VAC). As such, there would be no motivation, from simply studying Tanaka et al, to include a selector switch for selecting one outlet or the other, let alone some motivation to dispose such a selector switch in between the two outlets, with the outlets disposed at opposite longitudinal ends of the control panel. Again, one can only reach the combination that the Examiner has made by using the teachings of applicant's own invention against the application. There is simply nothing in Tanaka et al to suggest or motivate one of ordinary skill in the art that a selector switch, disposed in between the two outlets, would be a highly beneficial feature. If anything, Tanaka et al is completely silent on the problem of making sure that the user does not use the wrong outlet, since

the outlets shown in Tanaka et al are not described as providing different output voltages.

Independent claim 19 similarly includes the limitations of a "first electrical outlet" disposed adjacent a first longitudinal end of the second zone, a "second electrical outlet" disposed adjacent a second longitudinal end of the second zone, and a "switch" disposed inbetween the first and second electrical outlets "for selecting for use one or the other of first and second electrical outlets". There is nothing in Tanaka et al that would suggest the limitations of claim 19.

Claim 35 similarly sets forth the limitation of a zone including "a first AC outlet" at a first longitudinal end of the zone, a "second AC outlet" at a second longitudinal end of the zone, and a "switch disposed longitudinally between said first and second AC outlets", within said zone, for selecting one or the other of said AC outlets for use. Again, these limitations are clearly not suggested or shown by Tanaka et al.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully, yet strenuously, urged to reconsider the rejection of various ones of the claims in view of Tanaka et al. It appears that the inventive concepts of the inventor's own application are being used against the applicant in this instance. It is respectfully submitted that Tanaka et al cannot possibly be read to suggest the limitations of independent claims 1, 19 and 35.

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: June 3, 2003

By: 

Mark D. Elchuk  
Reg. No. 33,686

HARNES, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.  
P.O. Box 828  
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303  
(248) 641-1600  
MDE/jo